

AHC : Newsletter #34 : December 2023

INTRODUKTION

Kære læser. Forfatter Ida Marie Hede var i foråret en del af AHC's *Testing Ground*, hvor hun under overskriften *Den endnu urealiserede forestilling* inviterede forskellige personer til en samtale i Thiemers Magasin i et forsøg på at nærme sig en form og et stof til et endnu ikke realiseret manuskript. De fire samtaler var med henholdsvis forsker Adam Bencard, kunstner Sidsel Meineche Hansen, arkitekt og kurator Sofie Højgaard og scenograf Nathalie Mellbye samt performancekollektivet Mycelium. De indeholdt blandt andet en seance, hvor gæsterne sammen med Ida Marie Hede selv fremførte en kort dialog, som hun havde forfattet forud for samtalen. Alle fire formidable dialoger kan du nu finde og læse [her på AHC's website](#), og nedenfor i brevet her kan du læse Ida Marie Hedes fine før-og-efter-refleksioner om dét at forfatte teaterstykket i sidste ende. Om at føle sig som en kyllingenugget undervejs i arbejdet, om stofskiftetænkning, og om hvordan de dødes stemmer ville lyde, hvis de kunne tale lige nu. Og så skal du glæde dig til den 1. februar 2024! Her udkommer Ida Marie Hedes manuskript, *PROTECT THE SALMON*, endeligt i en publikation, udgivet af AHC. Rigtig god læselyst! Nu og i fremtiden.

INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader. Last spring, author Ida Marie Hede took part in AHC's *Testing Ground* programme – a place for artists, writers and curators who want to try out an idea, project or material in front of an audience. Seeking substance and a shape for a yet-to-be-realised manuscript, Ida Marie Hede invited a number of people to a conversation in Thiemers Magasin bookshop under the title *The Still Unrealised Play*. The four conversations were with researcher Adam Bencard, artist Sidsel Meineche Hansen, architect and curator Sofie Højgaard, and scenographer Nathalie Mellbye together with the performance collective Mycelium. It included a session where the guests, along with Ida Marie Hede herself, performed a short, scripted dialogue. These four interesting dialogues can now be read [on AHC's website \(in Danish only\)](#), while in this letter below, you can read Ida Marie Hede's fascinating before-and-after reflections on writing the theatre piece itself. On feeling like a chicken nugget while working. On metabolic cognition. And on the sound of the voices of the dead, if they could speak right now. And then you have to look forward to the 1st of February 2024! Here, Ida Marie Hede's manuscript, *PROTECT THE SALMON*, finally appears in a publication, published by AHC. Happy reading! Now and in the future.

DEN ENDNU UREALISEREDE FORESTILLING

af Ida Marie Hede

INTRO

I 2022 inviterede kurator Jacob Fabricius mig til at skrive et dramatisk manuskript til et pop-up teaterstykke. Udstillingen, fortalte Jacob, ville blive en performativ totalinstallation, en opfølger eller indledning til Fabricius' tidligere udstillinger i serien *iwillmedievalfutureyou*. Jeg var pirret af konceptet og havde set de tidligere udstillinger i *iwillmedievalfutureyou*-serien med interesse. Jeg sagde ja til at skrive noget nyt. Der blev søgt penge, men der kom afslag. Jeg blev nervøs, og der var heller ikke endnu fundet en scene for forestillingen. Var den eneste mulighed så ikke at skrive? Eller skrive ud i det åbne? At skrive et urealiseret teaterstykke?

Jeg lavede en aftale om økonomi med Jacob, og jeg kunne tænke videre. At skrive det urealiserede teaterstykke begyndte at stå både klarere og mere grumset for mig. Var det faktisk godt med denne følelse af at skrive et slags skelet? Når jeg bruger mit eget liv som stof – og er det ikke altid sådan? – tænker jeg på mig selv som en kylling. På gode dage, den slags nugget som mine børn tigger mig om på McDonalds. Kyllingen er både produktet (vi spiser den) og kroppen, der arbejder. I kyllingens korte liv bliver flere tider mast sammen – den naturlige tid, kyllingen skal bruge for at reproducere sig, og den tid, kyllingen rent faktisk bliver givet eller ikke bliver givet, en tid under tvang. Kyllingen kan selvfølgelig også henføres til den egentlige arbejder, den som regel underbetalte krop, der forarbejder og pakker kyllingen, så den kan blive tilgængelig i kummefryseren for os velnærede kroppe. Med kyllingen som billede tænker jeg på, hvad der sker, når tid og materiale, arbejde og liv støder sammen.

På den måde fletter *iwillmedievalfutureyou* sig ind i interesser, jeg længe har haft. Mine egne spørgsmål til en verden optaget af kroppe, arbejde, tid, kapital, fremdrift, skønhed, perfektion, selvoptimering og stor angst og afmagt for døden. En både nekro- og biopolitisk verden. En verden opslugt af en splittelse mellem at accelerere det allerede eksisterende eller at redde, heale, finde sprækker eller klodsede fællesskaber.

OUTRO

Det er november 2023, og jeg har skrevet mit *endnu urealiserede teaterstykke* færdigt. En af de scener, jeg er glad for, er en lille dialog om en leg, hvor en voksen og et barn jager hinanden gennem en stue med en dybfrossen laks. De glemmer at lægge laksen tilbage på køl, så den senere rådner, og barnet må begrave den i haven indpakket i plastik. Jeg er glad for den omsorg, de drager for den udryddelsestruede laks, som samtidig "bare" er en vakuumpakket klump – en rekvisit, kummefrysere og ven.

Laksebilledet siger noget om død, mad, relationer. Om at være en lille, rådden krop i verdens store systemer. I begyndelsen af mit samarbejde med AHC tænkte jeg meget på alle disse ting. I en af mine *Testing Ground*-samtaler interviewede jeg Adam Bencard, lektor i Medical

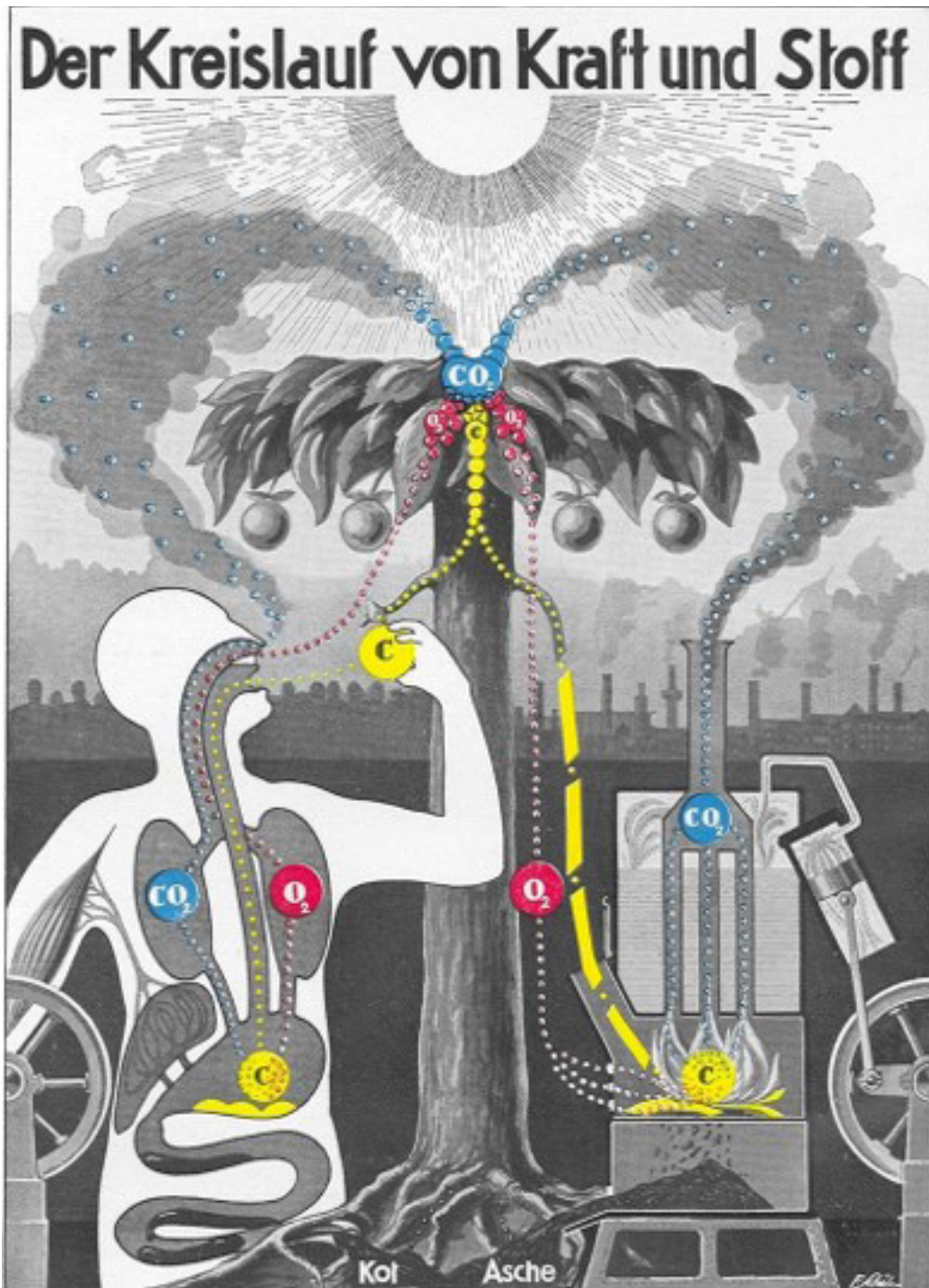
Humanities ved Medicinsk Museion og NNF Center for Basic Metabolic Research på Københavns Universitet. Adam er ekspert i stofskifte-studier, en tænkning, der ser verden gennem en materiel linse. Stofskifte handler om ernæring og livsopretholdende kredsløb, om at spise og blive spist, udskille og transformere. Stofskifte er også et politisk koncept. Marx mente bl.a., at kapitalismen skabte et brud i kroppens cykliske forhold til naturen. Gennem stofskifte kan man se på, hvordan energi flyder gennem verden, fx mellem land og by eller gennem classesystemer.

Jeg lavede en joke om at føle mig som en kyllingenugget, når jeg skulle arbejde, og Adam fortalte mig straks om YouTube-kanalen *Folding Ideas*' episode om Jamie Oliver – nærmere bestemt det tv-show, hvor den britiske stjernekok prøver at vise en gruppe skolebørn, at kyllingenuggets ikke kun består af det 'gode kød', men også af blendet brusk, marv og ben. Han viser dem en klam, pink, blendet dej. Hvor mange ville stadig spise de her nuggets? spørger Oliver retorisk. Men alle børnene fra Huntington, West Virginia rækker hænderne op. De siger ikke nej til nogen nuggets, selvom Oliver insisterer på, at der findes "ulækre" forarbejdede og "lækre" hjemmelavede nuggets. For Oliver handler fødevarerbevidsthed om at lave usund mad lidt sundere og dyrere; om at bruge den gode kylling. Men hans intervention bliver moralsk og udstiller forholdet mellem fattigdom og 'dårlig mad'. For selvfølgelig kan børnene ikke gennemskue, hvordan den her nugget-lækkerbissen hænger sammen med klasse, tid og ressourcer og på ti minutter hæve sig op over det hele. Og skulle man pege på problemerne med kyllingenuggets, er det værste ikke de blendede ben, som faktisk indeholder næringsstoffer, men fødevarerindustriens umenneskelige forhold til dyr, de mange underbetalte migrantarbejdere osv.

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Stofskiftetænkningen fortæller os, at verden er et (ofte uigennemskueligt) system. Hvad forstår vi? Hvad ved vi? Hver dag, når jeg prøver at arbejde, afbrydes jeg af små plings fra min skærm. Her livestreames den israelske regerings ustoppelige bombardementer i Gaza. Her er de fleste kroppe dækkede af gråt støv og blod. Jeg ser det med vantro øjne. Forsøger ikke at kigge væk. Nogen laver mad på et hospitalsgulv over et lille blus, mellem de andre sårede. En krig er aldrig bare en krig. En krig er føde på trods, kroppe, der ikke kan blive begravede, sygdomme, gas og olie i jord og hav, globale kredsløb.

Jeg prøver at svare på mine egne spørgsmål fra projektets begyndelse, flere af dem har mistet deres kraft op imod verdens uhyrligheder. Andre spørgsmål træder alligevel frem: *Hvordan ville de dødes stemmer lyde, hvis de talte lige nu?* Jeg svarer: Sådan her? Selvom befolkningen i Gaza stadig er levende, er det, som om jeg holder vejret, forudser eller frygter deres abrupte død. *Hvornår er et menneske værst?* Som soldat for en ideologi. *Hvorfor er det ikke alt arbejde, der anerkendes som arbejde?* Fordi ikke alle kroppe anerkendes som ligeværdige. *Kan fremtiden blive givet til de undertrykte, før den bliver givet til de sejrende, så de undertrykte ikke kun skal redde sig fortiden tilbage?* I en drøm af cyklisk tid – her vokser håbet for de bombede, de frihedsberøvede, alle de implicerede, en umulig fremtid vokser, så den overtrumfer ødelæggelsen.



A STILL UNREALISED PLAY

by Ida Marie Hede

INTRO

In 2022, curator Jacob Fabricius invited me to write a theatre script for a pop-up theatre piece. The exhibition, Jacob told me, would be an immersive performance installation, a sequel or introduction to his previous exhibitions in the *iwillmedievalfutureyou* series. Having seen the series, I was intrigued by the concept. I agreed to write something new. Funding was applied for but refused. We hadn't even found a venue for staging of the play. I became nervous. Was the best option, then, not to write? Or simply to write into the open and unknown? To write an unrealised play?

I made an agreement about money with Jacob. Now I could think things through further. Writing the unrealised play started to become both clearer and more obscure. Was it actually good, this feeling of writing something skeletal? When I use my own life as material – and isn't that always what happens? – I think of myself as a chicken. On good days, the kind of nugget my children beg me for at McDonald's. The chicken is both the product (we eat it) and the body that does the labour. In the chicken's short life, several periods of time are flattened into one – the natural time the chicken needs to reproduce, and the time the chicken is actually allowed or not allowed. A spell of forced labour. Of course, the chicken can be said to owe something to the actual labourer – the usually underpaid body that processes and packages that chicken so that it can be available in the chest freezer for other well-fed bodies like us. Using the chicken as an image, I think about what happens when time and material, labour and life, collide.

In this way, *iwillmedievalfutureyou* knits itself in with interests I've had for a long time. My own questions to a world preoccupied with bodies, work, time, capital, progress, beauty, perfection, self-optimisation and a great fear of (and powerlessness against) death. A world of both necropolitics and biopolitics. A world consumed by a split between the acceleration of what already exists and rescuing, healing. Finding cracks or makeshift communities.

OUTRO

It's November 2023 and I've finished writing my *still unrealised play*. One of the scenes I really like is a little dialogue about a game in which an adult and a child chase each other with a frozen salmon through a living room. They forget to put the salmon back in the fridge, so it later rots and the child has to bury it in the garden wrapped in plastic. I like the care they take for the endangered salmon, which is "just" a vacuum-packed lump – a prop, deep-frozen goods, and a friend.

The salmon-image says something about death, food, relations. About being a little rotten body caught up in big planetary systems. At the beginning of my collaboration with AHC, I thought about all these things a lot. In one of my *Testing Ground* talks, I interviewed Adam

Bencard, Associate Professor of Medical Humanities at the Medical Museion and the NNF Centre for Basic Metabolic Research at the University of Copenhagen. Adam is an expert in metabolic studies – a way of thinking about the world through a material lens. Metabolism is a matter of nutrition and life-sustaining cycles, about eating and being eaten, excreting and transforming. Metabolism is also a political concept. Marx believed, among other things, that capitalism created a rupture in the body's cyclical relationship with nature. Through the lens of metabolism studies, we can see the ways in which energy flows through the world – between rural and urban areas, for example, or through class systems.

I made a joke about feeling like a chicken nugget when I was working, and Adam immediately told me about [the episode](#) on Jamie Oliver on the YouTube channel *Folding Ideas* – specifically, the TV show where the British celebrity chef tries to show a group of schoolchildren that chicken nuggets are not made of 'good meat' only, but a combination of cartilage, marrow, and bone. He shows them a gross pink amalgamate batter. How many would still eat these nuggets? Oliver asks rhetorically. But all the children from Huntington, West Virginia raise their hands. They won't say no to *any* nuggets, even though Oliver insists that there exist "disgusting" processed and "delicious" homemade nuggets. For Oliver, food awareness is about making unhealthy food a little healthier and more expensive – about using *good* chicken. But his intervention becomes moralistic. It exposes the relationship between poverty and "bad food". Because, of course, the children can't untangle this constellation of nuggety deliciousness, class, time, and resources and simply rise above it all in ten minutes flat. And if you were to point to the problems with chicken nuggets, then the mashed bones, which actually contain nutrients, aren't the worst thing: that's the food industry's inhumane treatment of animals, all the underpaid migrant workers, etc.

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Metabolic thinking tells us that the world is an (often opaque) system. What do we understand? What do we know? Every day, as I try to work, I'm interrupted by little plings from my screen. This is the live stream of the Israeli government's unceasing bombardment of Gaza. Here, most bodies are covered in grey dust and blood. I watch in disbelief. I try not to look away. Someone is cooking on a hospital floor over a small stove, among the other wounded. A war is never just a war. A war is sustenance, of course, bodies that can't be buried, diseases, gas and oil on land and in the sea, global circuits.

I try to answer my own questions from the beginning of the project, many of which have lost their power in the face of the world's atrocities. Other questions still emerge: *How would the voices of the dead sound if they were speaking right now?* I answer: Like this? Even though the people of Gaza are still alive, it's as if I'm holding my breath, anticipating or fearing their abrupt deaths. *When is a person worst?* As a soldier for an ideology. *Why isn't all work recognised as work?* Because not all bodies are recognised as equal. *Can the future be given to the oppressed before it's given to the victorious, so that the oppressed can do more than merely reclaim the past?* In a dream of cyclical time – here grows hope for the bombed, those robbed of their freedom, all those implicated, an impossible future grows, defeating destruction.



KALENDER

CALENDAR

AHC : Flanders : Ryan Cullen : The Dark Knight Rises : 11.01.24 : 07.00-09.00PM

AHC : www.arthubcopenhagen.net : info@arthubcopenhagen.dk : Halmtorvet 27, 1700 DK-Cph V

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